794 776 778 [563] In some villages, the sacrificer never consumes butter or milk, foods which the Peul furnish the Bambara.

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

794 776 825 The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot [582 626] rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

794 776 782 As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective), of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

794 778 852 When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are, by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented to all the allies senánku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom they proceed to joke.

776 precision of which the native substratum seems unaware. In any event, there is no Bambara word for "God" except the one [177] brought by the Moslems -- "Allah," pronounced as Ngala. This lack of a Bambara word may be explained by their custom of avoiding pronouncing the name of powerful people for fear of incurring their wrath.

There is no superior spirit of evil: Seïtane [Satan] is [177] likewise a Moslem introduction. The Bambara does not visualize a hierarchy of spirits.

Finally, it must be concluded, from the existence of 776 many magic practices, that there is a belief in a kind of uni- 778 versal energy, which is diffuse by nature and which, by appropriate 789 means, one can capture and use as one likes. Certain genii or gods are merely emanations of this invisible, imponderable and active force, which no obstacle can stop and which can instantly overcome space and strike at a distance. This is the basis of all native magic.

[129] 2. Morality and Customs

776 When, as among Catholics and Moslems, the after-life is believed to be influenced by one's conduct in this life, there 577 is a rule which determines what is and what is not proper if one wishes to earn the greatest possible rewards in the life to come. The saints and pious men have shown the way to this end.

For the Bambara, however, the next life is merely a continuation of this one and he does not think that he can, by conduct, improve his chances in the next life since it offers no rewards or punishments for his day-by-day actions. Neither his manes nor his genii give him an example of conduct to guide him. Therefore, without thought of the future, he goes along solely concerned with the present; he seeks what will give him pleasure, tries to avoid what seems harmful, and all this in a groping way, as one walks in the dark.

577 Sometimes, it is true, he is led to behave with a degree of decency and to avoid certain too shocking lapses, which would 626 expose him to reproach, alienate his friends and create for him

577 an uncomfortable situation among his own family; but under-
626 neath this surface, the evil shows through. It is not unusual to
577 be faced with a disconcerting absence of moral sense, ferocious
157 egotism, deep-seated duplicity, impudent treachery and cold, unperturbed cruelty (1). And one can see, perhaps in all of

1. The chronicle of Ségou, especially, attests this tradition of trickery and hypocrisy (see especially the tales about Ma-n-son, p. 93, and about Da, p. 101).

them, the scorn and even hatred felt for anyone who is unfortunate, weak, ill or abandoned. However, it should certainly be noted that there are also Bambara who display the most disinterested devotion, generous hospitality and remarkable courage; some even give evidence of that kind of inborn distinction which is to be found among even the most primitive peoples and which is the mark of superior people.

183 Thus, no code organizes Bambara rules of life. Everything depends upon custom, that mysterious thread, at once fragile and strong, which links the generations one with another [130] and which sustains the individual, though he is unaware of it, to such an extent that he is completely lost without it. Handed down by earlier generations, superstitiously preserved, it is imposed through fear of the punishment which will follow transgression. At first glance, custom appears to be an amalgam of the most heterogeneous elements and that is why we Europeans find it at once respectable and ridiculous, good and bad, useful and futile, sometimes atrocious and then again excellent. On closer study it is seen to exhibit, on the basis of feelings common to all humanity, an efflorescence peculiar to the native milieu, a natural morality which duplicates positive laws.

It is the nature of man to observe certain laws, to see the good and the bad in what surrounds him and, in his conduct, to display a leaning toward the good and an aversion to the bad. He recognizes within himself something which criticizes his actions from a similar point of view and, which, in fact, judges them.

183 The Bambara has a very highly developed sense of this
181 idea of justice and there is nothing he resents more than injustice or a denial of justice. His resentment is stubborn and his vengeance, which may be deferred under a show of indifference, is implacable. The chronicle of Ségou is rich in pertinent examples. There was Ngolo Dyara, bringing murder and disaster on his own relatives in order to satisfy his hatred for having been sold into slavery by his uncle and not ransomed by any of his relatives. There was Kégné Mari who, watching the murder of Touro-koro in the Komo wood, expressed his vengeance finally fulfilled by saying: "Remember how, falsely accusing me of adultery with one of your wives, you had me lashed? And how on that day I told you that even though I were lying on the ground, if I could touch you with my foot, I would lay you low? Here at last is the day of my vengeance!" Similar examples are innumerable.

If he is powerless against injustice, the Bambara will wait patiently and, each time he has to speak, will dissimulate his weakness in formulas which have a double meaning, such as
[195] O do!, meaning "That's it!" O nya-na, meaning "Oh well!" Tigi!, meaning "That's true"; and other similar expressions. At the same time, he is repeating to himself his proverb: don' m'i fantan', a bla k'a teme, meaning "Don't pay attention while you are weak," that is, "Wait until I am strong enough to take vengeance (lit., to pay you back)."

181 This instinctive feeling for justice accounts, in a certain
571 measure, for the family bonds made up of reciprocal rights [131]
626 and duties between parents and between them and their children and, by an analogy of which we shall see other examples, between master and slave and between chief and subject. The obligation to respect all pacts concluded in the form of vows, oaths or fraternal alliance rests on the same basis. And it is the same notion that inspires the repression of acts which are almost universally condemned: perjury, treason, false witness, slander,
[691] theft and murder. It sustains the tireless persistence of the pleader who will go through endless lawsuits to obtain redress for a wrong done to him or to one of his people. And it gives strength to public vengeance against the sorcerer.

583 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the
768 husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

These three definite points show that lawful union, or
581 marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the
626 woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1)
562
[554]

1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

428 2. If there are no children, the collateral males and,
596 lacking them, ~~the~~ wives.
614 3. If there are no collateral relatives, the ascendants.
4. If there are no ascendants, the surviving spouse.
5. If there is no surviving spouse, escheat occurs: [220] the inheritance reverts to the head of the settlement, the dugu-tigi, when this settlement is independent; otherwise to the head of the clan, the fama.

596 The community and the individual. The result of the
614 foregoing is that the individual, whoever he may be and whatever his situation, has no value except as a member of a community (1); it is the community that exists and has an identity,

[567] 1. A slave has no rights because, as a person, he belongs to no community.

while the individual exists and is identified only through the community and for the community.

An individual who exists apart from any faya is, therefore, an anomaly, and this situation comes to an end as soon as the individual himself becomes fa.

596 There are cases, however, when an individual is put out
614 of his community because of his own action or because of circumstances, and extraordinary changes of status result.
●626 Anyone driven from his community for bad conduct loses his rights to the faya in that community.

564 If his disqualification results from the practice of a trade
558 regarded as degrading, he falls into what the Bambara call nyama-ka-la and Europeans call "people of caste." Henceforth he is not only excluded from his community, but he lives apart from all persons not declassed; he is a free man of inferior standing. He usually lives under the protection of a community of persons not declassed, earning his living from it and deriving from it such consideration as may be sometimes given him.

564 Among the Bambara, the nyama-ka-la include: the
463 numu, blacksmiths, whose wives are usually potters; the loro, who work with copper; the garanke, who work leather; and the kule, who work with wood and are sometimes saddlers.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
778 ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
● 626 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man; his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
778 exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

The koré fetish watches over the crops and gives its initiates the only pleasures that they know and desire -- to drink, to eat, and to enjoy /104/ a woman -- and, as will later be demonstrated, all this comes out in their dances and orgies. In spite of its great power, the poor genie cannot handle its many concerns; the Bambara, who judge everything according to themselves to such an extent that they inject their own organization into the world of invisible beings, have therefore given it eight groups of spirits who carry out its orders and make up its court. Some watch over the insignia and preserve the names of the initiates, and others render powerless anyone who would harm the crops. Just like a distinguished, powerful, and rich man here, the koré has its storyteller /griots/ or heralds, the korodouga, who sing its praises, transmit to it the petitions and prayers of the initiates, and dance its dances. The eight groups of the sect are simply the representation of this court, the concrete expression of the Negroes' concept of it.

The initiation into, or affiliation with, the koré sect takes place only every seven years. It is long and painful; for fifteen days the young initiates live in the sacred grove and cannot go into the village. Since they need some training for future dances, the old men come to torment them every noon in the worst heat, and each initiate, according to the group to which he belongs, suffers for some moments the torment of fire, thorns, or the rod.

[126] The rigor of the admission in no way alienates the Bambara, and in Bani it is a disgrace to refuse the hen for the sacrifice and the /payment of/ 120 cowrie shells, and not to join. It is true that everything is repaid, for the sect has many festivals and d'lo, or millet beer, is never lacking.

In addition to the annual sacrifice, a sacrifice is made to the genie every time an initiate dies. There is another sacrifice on the anniversary of his death, and during the dry season the kore dé go from one festival to another, spending their nights in nameless drinking bouts and orgies. /105/

684 626 As long as he has not received the entire indemnity, the injured husband shouts, threatens, and attacks the guilty woman and man with his fists, but then the last cowrie shell is paid and all is quiet. Furthermore, should he be slow in calming down, his wife would most certainly run away and everyone would treat him as a boor. In fact, after having harshly rebuked the culprit and his accomplice and made them promise never to repeat the offense, the headman and elders go to the hut of the husband and say to him: "Your wife has promised not to default on her honor again, her seducer has paid the fine, so come, pardon them!" When the elders, the headman in the lead, put themselves out like this, they impose their will, and whoever does not say with them: "Kouma banna (1), the matter is settled, let us speak no

1. Kouma, "word," "talk";
banna, "is finished."

more of it," is no less than a cad.

684 195 If adultery is established but the seducer and his accomplice have not been caught, the case becomes complicated, for the accused will deny the crime. The matter is brought before the court of elders, and, the powerful boli come out of their sanctuaries and for a moment leave the goatskins which they use as tabernacles. The accusers swear on the fetish (kali, "to swear," boli la) (2), and on the basis of the

2. Kali boli la, "may the boli kill me if I am lying."

verbal proofs that they bring testify that there has been adultery. The accused are summoned, and if they persist in denying the charge, they are commanded to swear on the fetish to attest their innocence. Quite often they refuse, /162/ and matters drag on. The suit must finally be settled, so the husband and the accusers call on the most popular fetish with the words: "An ta boli sien (1) let us sacrifice to

1. The boli sien consists of oaths by both the accusers and the accused.

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> The accusers swear: "If we are accusing falsely, may the boli kill us." The accused swear: "We are not guilty, and if we are may the boli kill us."

the boli, and may he take the life of the liar." When the council of elders has decided on the boli sien, it must be carried out. If the accused is guilty he will admit it, for to call on an idol to bear witness to a lie is to doom oneself to death, to decree one's own death. For a boli has no pity for a perjurer, and legends tell of more than one case identical to that of Ananias and Sapphira.

626 688 Some Negroes nevertheless perjure themselves. From then on they lose all peace; one fine day they can hold out no longer, and they go to find the master of the idol, and to him they confess their crime and their transgression. In order to save their lives they make 688 a gnénama fani (2), and when they have paid the fani-n-kolo (3),

> 2. Gnénama, "living thing," "one who lives"; fani, "throat cutting"; gnénama fani, "throat cutting for one's life."

> 3. Fani, "throat cutting," "sacrifice"; kolo, "cowrie shells," "price"; fani-n-kolo, "price of the sacrifice."

the staff of the fetish denounces the culprit (4).

> 4. A Negro who perjures himself in the presence of a fetish believes himself lost. Moreover, the boli taken as witness is the one most famous for its power in that circle, for instance, the Komo of Tigini,

626 Every seducer who has paid the fine demanded by the fiancé can walk with head held high, for he has satisfied justice, cleansed his honor, and his shield is unstained. But let him not be careless enough to go to the village of the injured fiancé, for he will be /164/ beaten hard by the young people; his exclusion often lasts for years.

010 Now, there is no reason to be surprised at the Bambara attitude toward adultery and fornication. If it can all be reduced to a violated principle of justice and nothing more, that is because they have fallen so low that they believe they were created and put in the world by God in order to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh as much as possible.

Abortion

562 Monsieur Louis Barbier wrote in the "Quinzaine" (January 16, 1906) /"Étude sur les populations Bambaras de la Vallée du Niger (A Study of the Bambara Peoples of the Niger Valley)"/: "The Bambara woman is a machine to produce children and do heavy work." In this statement he expresses, I am sure, the belief of all Europeans who have stayed among the Negroes without mingling with them or living their life. If the Bambara woman "is a machine to produce children," [563] it is a slow machine. I know families where there are seven and eight children by the same wife, but that is unusual; the average remains two or three children per woman.

853 837 It is not through frequent childbearing or because they are prolific that Bambara women lose their charms and wither. They do not, and cannot, conceive but every two or three years; they cannot bear a child more than once every three or four years, since every mother nurses her child for at least two whole years, and quite often three, and during all that time she may not conceive. Does she remain continent during that time? What is to be thought of these utterances on the part of a husband:

A ye den soro a ti son toun.
She has had a child, she wants no more relations with me.
Né t'à don toun, ne tigouéré a la toun.
I do not know her any more, I no longer go near her.